

Regular meeting of the Parks and Recreational Advisory Board (PRAB)
Summary Minutes – January 13, 2014
Harvey Govt. Center, Key West, Fl.

Members Present:

Steve Miller, Chair
Dr. Jim Boilini, Co-Chair/Member
Bob Mock, Member
Heather Smith, Member
Chris Tejera, Member

Staff Present:

Rosa Washington, Monroe County Parks & Rec Board Liaison
Johnnie Yongue, Monroe County Engineering Dept.

Guests Present:

Commissioner Danny Kolhage	Roman Gastesi – County Administrator
William P. Horn, Architect, PA	Benjamin Burle – Ben Burle Design
Dan Dombroski, Boys & Girls Club - Big Pine	Melson Maxine
I. DeSantis, Assistan to Commissioner Kolhage	Chris Pritcher
Dent Pierce, Public Works	Glenwood Lopez
Cece Williamson	Ethel Simmons
Rob Smith-Martin	Nancy Coward
Patty Snyder	William McDonough
Alejandro Quiros	Mike Spontak
Roger Bernstein	Scott Paul – PAL
Kevin Madok – Monroe County	

Meeting

Call to Order: Chairman Miller called the meeting to order at 6: 05pm. A quorum was present.

Self-Introductions by Board Members.

Chair Miller welcomed all to the meeting. Chair Miller reminded the group that they are an advisory board, they do not set policy, and they recommend to the Board of County Commissioners what course of action they should take. The Board's main job is to get input from the community.

Summary Minutes of 01-13-14, approved as written (motion by Mr. Mock and seconded by Ms. Tejera and approved by a unanimous vote of those members present).

Chair Miller moved item #5, regarding Bernstein Park.

There were nine (9) individuals that signed up to speak.

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The first speaker was Mr. Roger Bernstein who provided a brief history of the park. Mr. Bernstein shared with the group that his family could not be happier to see how often that park is used, and how important the park has become to not only Stock Island but to the Lower Keys and the whole County.

Mr. Bernstein thanked the County Manager and the Commissioners for “considering an appropriation to improve the park, solve its drainage problems and make it better, safer and more used.” He stated that he wishes that his parents (Maria and Ben Bernstein) were here to see the park, since his mother participated with Commissioner Wilhelmina Harvey in the idea of transferring the park property to the County. It was done after they had been approached to sell the park for a jail. His mother did not think that it was a very good idea, when the area was just starting to be developed residentially. He further stated that the park has been critical to the changes in Stock Island, and it began a push for more parks in the Keys.

Ben Burle is a landscape designer based in Key West and Miami. Mr. Burle stated that an architect is good and that Mr. Horn is well respected, but his question is if a landscape designer or garden designer will be involved with the project, and who will be selecting the trees and palms that will be introduced to the landscape. He also wanted to know if there are any artists collaborating in the project. He suggested that mostly native plants should be planted and the emphasis should be placed on proper maintenance, and to make it the best for everyone.

Mr. Horn, 915 Eaton Street, Key West, lead Architect on this project introduced members of his team (Avelia Medina, Architect, Barbara Mitchell, Planner and Allan Perez, Civil Engineer and Mr. Roberts who was on his way), which is basically the same team that did the Higgs Beach project.

Ms. Mitchell (Mitchell Planning and Design) made a presentation on existing conditions, land use, regulations, variance potential needs, and the whole process they will have to go through to get approval from the County. She stated that the community around the park is the primary users of the park, many live within walking distance and have the opportunity to use the park.

Ms. Mitchell stated that one of the nuances associated with this particular zoning district are the setback (the requirement from the County is a 50ft. setback from each of the adjacent roads) and parking requirements. The design team has had preliminary discussion with the Growth Management Division as to what can be done to reduce those requirements. As of now it appears that staff supports changing the setback requirements.

Ms. Mitchell stated that in regards to the parking, it looks like we will need a variance for the parking requirement as it appears outlined in the Code; currently the parking requirement is five spaces for every 1,000 sq. ft. of the site that is used for outdoor recreational activity. We have about 112,000 sq. ft. of recreational area (ball and playing fields) which would require 563 parking spaces. This is not realistic and may be a requirement that we may be able to get reduced with the more realistic program that we are presenting.

Development review is about 2-3 month process within the County.

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Mr. Horn introduced three (3) proposed schemes (plans), showing the possibilities of the sight. Mr. Horn shared the schemes shared with the attendees, and handed out 11 x 17 copies of the proposed plans. Schemes (proposed plans) will be posted on Monroe County Parks and Rec webpage.

Preliminary cost estimates puts this project at approximately \$3,000,000 (three million dollars), which is within the County's budget.

Mr. Horn also discussed the possibility of a 1500 sq. ft. community center, which would potentially add about \$500,000 or \$350 per sq. ft. (if it has separate bathrooms), to the project. He also mentioned that he had some inquiries about a "pool" he did not get the sense from the County that this was something they wanted to maintain or deal with.

Mr. Horn pointed out that as the audience can see the six plus acres of Bernstein Park fill up quick. We cannot get two large Soccer fields, but we can get one large field and other amenities.

Chair Miller asked about the size of the community center. Mr. Horn said that it was about 1,500 sq. ft.

Co-Chair Boilini asked Ms. Mitchell about the setbacks. She responded that right now there are no setbacks in some areas (the parking lot sits right on the road) and 20 ft. in other areas. Their proposals shows 25 ft. All three designs show different setbacks, the bathrooms have a 50 ft. setback.

Co-Chair Boilini asked if they are working under the assumption that the planning department will allow the setbacks of about 25 ft. Mr. Horn stated that he is hoping to get a variance to make it work.

Co-Chair Boilini asked, "How many parking spots are there currently?" Ms. Mitchell responded that there are about 25 or 30. In their design they are showing has 42, this is something that they wanted to get feedback on.

Co-Chair Boilini asked if this was with ADA consideration, and Mr. Horne responded, "Yes."

Co-Chair Boilini also asked if there is adult Softball in the Key West area. Mr. Horn responded that, "There are plenty of Softball fields; it is Soccer fields that are lacking. But we are showing adult men and women softball fields in the schemes, similar to the ones they have on Sugarloaf."

Co-Chair Boilini stated that, "What has happened in the past is that most fields in the County end up having outfield fences, they can be temporary or permanent like the one in Key Largo."

Co-Chair Boilini asked if the fences proposed could be removed easily after the season is over.

Mr. Horn responded that if they are temporary they could be removed. In Scheme three (3) the fence could be removed. Schemes 1 and 2 are less flexible.

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Chair Miller asked if there were any other questions.

Mr. Gastesi asked if Mr. Horn, “Have you taken a look at the pond, and what it would take to fill the pond? Is it doable out of the question? Is it a wetland? Are we looking at natives (plants) there?”

Mr. Horn responded that mangrove fringe and he does not believe that the pond could be filled.

Ms. Mitchell stated that she believes that pond provides tidal flow, and she does not believe that the pond can be filled. She stated that the County’s Environmental Resources is allowing them a 20 ft. setback from the water line. She does not believe that the pond could be filled.

Mr. Gastesi stated that he “would like to see you (the planners and architect) evaluate it to see if more land can be created and we can make it a bigger park.”

Chair Miller asked the architect and planners to stay around because there are a couple of things that he would like to address.

Chair Miller stated that first, though we’ve been putting Sheriff houses in the parks, it is not really making that much of a difference one way or the other. It is a great deal for the Sheriff and the officer that gets to live there, but the reality is that when they are home they are not really paying attention because they are either sleeping or just living their life. He stated that this is your park and he is just sharing the experiences that other communities have had with their parks.

Second, **Chair Miller** talked about green space and that at the last meeting several community members stressed that the community needs to preserve green space. He knows the community center is important to some of the attendees, and he supports it, but he is not sure that the park is the right location for it. He suggested looking at the Hickory House as a possible location for a community center, and it is a property that the County owns.

Chair Miller had copies of plot plans of the Hickory House which he was willing to share with the attendees.

Chair Miller further stated that the Hickory House has a building about 4800 sq. ft. with dock space. It is a beautiful location.

Comments

Mr. Dombroski, Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club, stated that, “I am very excited that the County would consider a community center in Stock Island. Stock Island is a very underserved community for kids. With the demographics of the City of Key West and County changing there will be more families living in Stock Island than in any other area of the City and there is very little things to do. We would love to operate a year-round program in Stock Island. I am talking about something in the daytime and the evenings; our current program is open 250

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days a year. I agree with Chairman Miller that 1500 sq. feet is just too small, not for a year-round program. We would need something much larger than that. We serve now 85 kids in Key West right now and we expand to 140 kids in the summer. It is also the rainy season, you have to feed, and you need lots of space. I anticipate that if we opened a program in Stock Island we would have about 60-80 kids easily the first year, 1500 sq. ft. is not going to do it. I don't know about the Hickory House, but I do know that there is great need for a program and a community center in Stock Island. Whether it's at the Hickory House or Bernstein Park, it is needed. The kids that we serve 60% their parents work for the Tourism industry and they have nothing to do when their parents are at work. What we do is provide that service, but again we need a facility. We are struggling in Key West because we are facility challenged. When I first heard about this I was excited, I envisioned something like we do at Blue Herron Park. I think that we have an opportunity here to do something, let's do it right so that we have something for generations of kids to use. I hope that you will consider something for us and for the kids that are in Stock Island."

Robin Smith-Martin, Board of Education (aka School District) said, "I just want to reiterate what Dan said. Stock Island has one of the greatest concentration of children in the whole County and is probably the most underserved group of children in the County. We need to do this right from the outset. I am big into league sports my kids play AYSO, football and baseball, and this is going to help those leagues, but we also have to focus on the needs of the immediate community and neighborhood. Many of the kids that live in that neighborhood right now are not playing league sports. What I would like to see is a structured facility that would support the Boys and Girls Club so that they would have a full time presence here for about 80 kids, who after-school are not supervised. I think our Sheriff would support this exercise because if we do this now 10 years from now the investment would pay off and we would have a different kind of community. In addition, whether a community center or a center for kids we will have to have separate bathrooms. We will also need to have some significant shade/rain structure, where potentially 75-80 people could run under for shelter. I would also like to see this be a purposely and efficiently landscaped, and start looking at how we can put some long term infrastructure in Stock Island; this is the nexus of Stock Island. I would promote seeing a series of pedestrian greenways implemented in Stock Island to promote people walking and biking in a safe manner, there are very few sidewalks in Stock Island. Start with this piece and then wrap it with pedestrian greenway that's lit. I think that if we put in the infrastructure we will see lots of good things happen in Stock Island in the next ten years. Thank you!"

Co-Chair Boilini asked, "Mr. Horn, what is the elevation of the property? Does the building have to be elevated? What zone is it in?"

Mr. Horn, "Two and three in some areas, six or seven for flood. We would have to elevate the building more or flood proof."

Co-Chair Boilini, "But if you did elevate it you would have all that space underneath for something."

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Mr. Horn, “If you elevate it you could not use the space for anything other than shade.”

Co-Chair Boilini, “Could you use it for playground?”

Mr. Horne, “Potentially, but then if you have a bathroom raised up so high with ramps, stairs and the concession stand in the shade is that where you want it so high? Or are you better off flood proofing it or some compromise that would make it more accessible to people coming in and out?”

Patty Snyder, Executive Director of Bahama Village Music Program, “We serve approximately 170 children in our after-school program each week. We could probably double that if we could expand to a location on Stock Island. I echo the comments made by Mr. Drombroski, I don’t believe 1500 sq. ft. would be a big enough building. Our music program would probably be able to use the entire building for lots of practice areas, for our pianos and drums. I also agree that another set of bathrooms need to be included to keep the crowd separate from the children. I also like the bus drop-off area in the plan. Thank you”

Chris Pritcher, “I am an attorney here in town, I am currently working with the City of Key West, but tonight I am here on behalf of the Rugby Team, and would like to start by thanking the Bernstein Family. The Bernstein Park and Key West Rugby Team have been intertwined for almost 10 years now. Key West Rugby re-sodded the field in 2005, it’s been our home and we’ve enjoyed being there and we thank the family for letting us to play there. We have an opportunity to re-vamp the park and we strongly recommend plan #1(A), because it allows all the auxiliary functions (parking, bathrooms, and playground) to be together and grouped. It allows all the fields to be there in a way that you can have two fields for Rugby, Soccer, Lacrosse, all these people that are being displaced from the City of Key West. Key West, Stock Island is a symbiotic unit; there are lots of baseball fields in the City of Key West, there are not Soccer fields, Lacrosse fields, Rugby fields. When we come out and look at the scheme it looks like two fields undersized if we play them side by side, but in all of South Fl. (Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Key Largo, Key West) you expect that when you host a tournament, you will have slightly smaller fields and a full size pitch to play tournament games, regulation games, championship games, this allows us to do both. If we look at the monetary value for the County, if we host a Rugby Tournament, we bring down 8 to 12 teams, 20 players to a team, that’s 300-500 people, plus wives, girlfriends, family, supporters, you could have 1,000 people in town for the weekend because we have two Rugby pitches and we can play games. Lacrosse can do the same thing, Soccer can do the same. This allows us to add value to the community while also getting something for the teams that are here locally. Key West Rugby has been here since 2005, we allow civilians and military to play, we have approximately thirty (30) members of the community. I apologize for the low turnout but we had short notice of the meeting. If you have a County ordinance meeting where you need to work on setbacks or an issue with zoning, we will be here twenty strong, thirty strong telling the Commission that this is what we (Rugby) want, this is what we need and what the community wants. This is something that it’s not only good for us but for Lacrosse, Soccer and also good for the County. If we redevelop Bernstein Park, we put the money into it; this would allow Key West to become a tournament City. Our travel

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teams do not have to go to Miami, teams will come here, that's dollars in our community. It is an excellent park for our community and for the future. Thank you."

Co-Chair Boilini, "Mr. Horne, how much would the park have to be raised to get the drainage correct?"

Mr. Horn, "Well, we are showing the fields, playground, building area and basketball courts all raised. Probably raised about two (2) feet. It would be nice to get the parking raised too, but that's the least critical."

Co-Chair Boilini, "How much?"

Mr. Horn, "Preliminary \$160,000 for imported fill, retaining wall \$170,000. Yes, 2 feet."

Scott Paul, "Thank you for inviting us for public input. I teach at the High School for the last eighteen years, Soccer as you can tell for the last fifteen. I am also on the executive board of the Police Athletic League (PAL). I think this discussion could go off on a thousand different directions so I will try to keep it to a couple because the Boys and Girls Club and the Police Athletic League have the same needs and both in conjunction with each other could take care of a large portion of the community with a community center. Both of us are in need of it, both of us have been looking; both of us have been battling. To me that is a separate issue, we have the 23 acres downtown, different place where it could and should be done. Our youth needs to be taken care of. For everyone that they don't have they can be taken care of with PAL. There is a need to be filled and we both need space and a place to take care of them. But, in the case of what we've come here for today, what I want to talk about is the idea, a couple of things, first of all is community. We need green space. Everyone here knows that as soon as it is gone it is gone forever in Key West, and we are down to a limited amount of green space. The other thing is that we don't take care of our green space we have."

"I am hoping that we as a group here or the people that are interested as this Board with Bernstein that this could the start as it should be a community project. Because what ends up happening is that Poinciana field for example, when it was a double field, is it a City field or a School District field? Why is the School District supporting a City league? Why shouldn't they? Why can't we put the two together? We've tried that. We've tried bringing HOB on line. What about the Navy? What about out on Sigsbee where there is green space? Grab it before it becomes like Peary Court and it's gone. The 23 acres downtown, the Bernstein Park, Sugarloaf field, we have green space if we can work together as a community, and that's the thing that I am hoping that as we start here we have City, School District and County hopefully can look at a Comprehensive Plan. With Bernstein I am hoping that we can stick with green space, that's the point that I was going to make. If we can do a piece here and then all go to the City Commission meetings again for the next twelve (12) years and hope that the twenty-three (23) acres will have green space. In that vein I would also like to say that I don't like that it says Soccer field, and I am a Soccer coach. I've heard that Commissioner Kolhage is into softball and it is not going to be Soccer field. I have not heard this come out of anyone's mouth; I've heard it from the community. I'd like to call it green space. Green space can be used for the twenty three (23)

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acres downtown, Bernstein Park, we can use it for Rugby, we can use it for softball, use it for Little Guy Football. Somebody was saying that we do not want to make it an AYSO Park, because we do not want to turn it over to one league. AYSO meets for only three months and they have been pushed from place, to place, to place with close to 700 kids. I don't necessarily think that it should be labeled and AYSO Park either. We should try to make the maximum amount of green space that we can use. Don't make it with a permanent fence."

"One of the other things that I came here to talk about is that we do field turf, for a couple of reason. As a coach, with my players, nothing will tear you up more than turf. But, with Rugby and the nine thousand illegal and unorganized Men's Soccer teams going around playing at the various parks, plus all the other teams from Key West, AYSO, Jr. League Football, all in one field. Then, we have softball looking for space when the games overlap. We need a multi-use park. The reason why I've always pushed for Soccer field is because it comes out at the biggest length and width, but it can be used downtown when we talk to the Commission meeting down there we've pointed out that if you want to put on a boat show you can put that on field turf. You start putting that kind of use on grass specially the way we don't maintain our grass. Go around and look at the public fields that we use, I play on them all, Gerald Adams, Poinciana, Sugarloaf, look at Bernstein. That's the third thing that I wanted to talk about. Please make sure that we budget for maintenance. For years the School District without thinking about it, it sure has been my impression; we gave you some grass shut up. Then, one year later we are replacing the field for another \$60,000, \$80,000 to \$100,000 and because we don't maintain. For two and a half years now we have shut off water, fertilizer and pesticides on our fields. We were killing all of them as a School District, for two and a half years. The city has been better about it. The County has been trying to maintain Bernstein but we've been over playing it because we have so little field space. The reason for field turf to get back to that, and join it with the maintenance part is that it's going to get used, and it should be used, and it should be multi used. It should not be called a Soccer field, Rugby field or Softball field because in our community we use all fields for all things. If we think about using the field, if PAL or Boys and Girls Club want to use the field to hold a community event on the turf field you can do it, but I guarantee if we go all grass in whatever we do here it will be ruined within a year with the amount of people that are looking forward to using it. So, I would ask that at least consider in the big field we use field turf.

Chair Miller, "Just out of curiosity, do you know if we use turf around anything else in Key West?"

Scott Paul (Coach Paul), "We have not put any field turn in Key West, because we really have not developed any of our fields. When you got to Boca, Weston, and you got to those parks, I know that Kendall Soccer Park has to do it because they are on an aquifer."

Chair Miller, "Do they have problems with like as we do with fire ants and stuff like that?"

Scott Paul (Coach Paul), "All that's gone. Now, there is maintenance. I've gone back with Eddie Diaz, who takes care of the two people who take care our fields from Coral Shores to here (for the School District), there is maintenance involved in field turf, but once it's in, the life of the field is long. It's expensive upfront, but over the long run it works out. I've sent Mr. Horn

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some of the information we have on field turf and the way the money works out. There are things that need to be put underneath it and all that. But we just know feet on the ground. Those of us that play on these fields know what goes on there. Poinciana, one season the field is ruined. Part of it is because we did not even fix the pump to get the water to the other half of the field. But that's what we do with our fields. 'It's in, Soccer shut up! We gave you what you needed. You've got green space here. Be quiet!' And then there is no maintenance, no care, no treatment and then we throw 700 kids on one field. Bernstein we throw, I'm telling you if it was less dangerous than it is now we'd have way more people out there. The field downtown that's grass was supposed to be there for two years, that Morgan McPherson put in, it's not a field and it's not safe. Nobody wants to go down there for anything, it's not a park, it's not a field, it is green space, but people that want to argue that we already have stuff will bring those up. Go see those fields!'

"It is no disrespect to the Bernsteins, it is awesome what they've given us. As a community, if we could finally bring something like that up, maintain it, make it a showcase. And then, go to the Navy, and then go to the City, and then go to the School District and spread all this out amongst field turf and grass and proper maintenance and now we lower the number of feet on them and the events that we can put on them. I know Spottswoods have talked about having a place to put our band shell there for concert. Field turf will allow for that. What about the boat show? You can park boats on field turf. All of these things can be done. Bernstein is a wonderful place for the County to show what can be done, and then hopefully we can join the community together and the School District will talk with the County, will talk with the City and we can come up with a comprehensive plan because it is all our community, we just happen to be so small that we overlap. So, hopefully we can do that and the Board goes forward with this. I'm with PAL, I am in favorite of a community center but I don't think this is the place. I say Go Green!"

Board Member Mock, "Going along with you one hundred percent (100%) Coach Paul. Except for we can't call it a green space, we've done it before and they planted St. Augustine there. We've got to call it an Athletic Field and we need athletic turf, because as soon as you change from an Athletic Field to green space they will plant St. Augustine because it's cheaper. St. Augustine does not hold up at all. We've got to maintain whether we are going to call it a Rugby Field of Soccer Field that it's going to be an Athletic Field somehow.

Chair Miller, The ones that have been up here for a long time we've seen quick fixes on this park that it's ridiculous, it's got to be done right and maintained, that's the key to keeping a good park. I'm afraid I can't read the next name is it Lopez?

Glenwood Lopez, I am a resident of Stock Island, retired educator thirty seven (37) years, worked with Scott Paul at Key West High School, Girls Basketball Coach for fifteen (15) years at Key West High School. Question to Mr. Horn, on the fifteen foot setback have you applied to the County for any variance?

Mr. Horn, "It's too early for that we are still looking at ideas. We cannot apply until we know what we want to do, look at all the drawing and various applications."

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Glenwood Lopez, “The community building that has been presented I too agree, what was the capacity of the building, space inside for people? Did you have any numbers?”

Mr. Horn, “About a four thousand square foot building, but there is covered space facing the field, storage space, bathrooms.”

Glenwood Lopez, “I meant how many people?”

Mr. Horn, We weren’t at that level, we were expecting something from Dan on some square footage, we did not get it so we just put something there for tonight which is fifteen hundred (1,500) square feet, for something to talk about, and obviously it’s been talked about a lot.

Glenwood Lopez, “I disagree with some of the other speakers that we don’t need the community building at Bernstein. I live on Stock Island. I am over at that place often, very often and we do need something on Stock Island that people can go to in terms of a community building. We don’t need to put everything downtown. There are a lot of kids on Stock Island! We need a community building on Stock Island. What I’ve been hearing is that we don’t need it on Stock Island we need it someplace else. Why? Why do we need it someplace else? We need it on Stock Island as well. Everybody likes to have some type of community building where kids can go have dances, you know, they built the Teen Center on the boulevard, they did that a long time ago. They did that to keep some kids from getting there and you see what happened to it, it’s no longer used. You have to make sure you take care of the kids. We’ve heard other people talk about taking care of kids. I’m an advocate for kids as well. So, I think that we do need a community center we just need it a little larger than it has been proposed.”

“The Hickory House, is the County in agreement with that, do you think?”

Chair Miller, I think that is a piece of property that the County holds and it’s quite frankly, Roman, what do you think? I mean I’ve got to be honest with you I did not throw this to the County at all I brought it to you people first to see if you even liked the idea. There is a piece of property that the County owns right here in Stock Island that would actually serve the purpose. What do you think?

Mr. Gastesi, Yeah, I think it’s a unique idea. I mean, obviously I just heard it for the first time and we would have to talk to the five bosses (County Commissioners) and see what they think.

Glenwood Lopez, “I would be in agreement with using that space and then you could take the fifteen (1,500) hundred out of the park if it is agreeable with the County. If that is something that we can pursue, I certainly would agree. It is forty eight hundred (4,800) square feet, you are allowing more space. I would also agree with some type of shelter. You know it does not have to be enclosed but something that people can get out of the element. I’ve seen some in Dade and Broward County where kids can get out of the rain and the hot sun.”

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Glenwood Lopez, “I also agree with not allowing the Sheriff Deputies the space that they use. Years ago I remember when it was implemented with the school system and half of the time they were working two jobs and they were never around. I don’t think they serve as much of a deterrent, and that is what it was supposed to be. I also disagree with taking the Bahama Village Program and bringing it to Bernstein Park? It is in Bahama Village to have it close to the kids in Bahama Village.”

Glenwood Lopez, “As I said, many of the questions that I had have been answered. Last, how does one become a member of your Board?”

Chair Miller, “We are appointed by the Commissioners.”

Mr. Bernstein, “Two quick points, this is a County park, not the Bernstein family park that you are using. I am very excited Richard about bringing tournaments in here. You should know that in Safe Harbor which is right next to this (Bernstein Park) the Commission has provided for mixed use commercial zoning, it’s almost finalized. There will be hotels in Safe Harbor, they will be cheaper hotels, I’m thinking like a Courtyard Marriott or something of that type. With those hotels and this upgraded park facility you will have a place to bring your teams from out of town within walking distance of the park, which I think it will be a great combination.

Patty Snyder, wanted to clarify that they are not considering moving their program from Bahama Village, they just want to expand their program into Stock Island.

Ethel Simons, I’ve been living in Stock Island for twenty (20) something years, I have children and grandchildren. I listened about the policeman that lives on the park, it’s a good idea and it’s not a good idea because when he sees certain people there he wants to run them away. My son loved to play basketball. He used to play basketball when he was in a wheel chair. Lots of the kids like to go out and play basketball to stay out of trouble. I have not heard anything about basketball. Lots of young guys like to play basketball. In regards to the policeman, they do need a policeman there some time because it keeps down the crime, they don’t have rapes and stuff like that because when they see the police car it makes them think. Maybe he does not do that much because he has to go to sleep and go to work, and they know what time he goes to sleep, but we need that there. I also mentioned to Mr. Kohlage and Belle about having a cover for them when it is raining. I think that you should consider that. Kids are our future and when they get wet on the way to school they do not want to do their school work. So, they do need a cover right now. Many kids don’t have transportation other than the bus. Also, maybe the policeman does not do that much but he is a deterrent.”

Chair Miller, “Thank you! Ok, Ben”

Ben Burle, “Mr. Horn, I believe from your presentation that your team is doing the landscape design as well?”

Mr. Horn, “Part of our team is Landscape Architect Mr. Roberts.”

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Ben Burle, “Mr. Roberts if I may ask you are there any shade trees? What material are you planning on implementing on to this site especially with the sea level being two (2) feet above sea level and the fill also? How do you plan on maintaining the park, because we have many other parks like Bayview Park and even Higgs Beach as a prime example, the Key West Garden Club planted a couple of things in the community garden but there is nothing substantial or aesthetically pleasing. One of the nicest parks close by is South Pointe Park in South Beach, it’s all native, multi-use, there is a restaurant and it’s used constantly day and night, very low maintenance. You don’t have people weed whacking, leaf blowing, nothing like that. I just want to make sure that you have a plan in place for that and I would like to know a little bit more about the design. I appreciate that you are going to have Rugby; I think that’s great but what about the person that has a child, and just wants to walk to the park and sit under a tree? That’s all I have to say.”

Chair Miller, “I would like to ask a couple of general questions and I am kind of looking for crowd reaction if I may. Number one, we discussed a Sheriff living on location. By a show of hands, how many of you would deem this necessary, something that you would really like to see? In other sites (parks) the scoreboards and equipment are locked away in a structure. The reason why it I’m coming back to this is because I keep on thinking about everyone talking about green space, green space. We’ve looked at the effectiveness in the other parks and we found it to be not that significant. Second, how many of you would like for Roman to approach his five (5) bosses and find out how feasible it would be to put your community center at the Hickory House? Roman, would you mind following up on this?”

Mr. Gastesi, I will. I will bring it up. We actually have a couple of meetings this month one on the 16th and one on the 31st.

Chair Miller, Do you need one of us to be there?

Mr. Gastesi, On the 31st probably. There will only be three Commissioners on the 16th. There will be a full Commission on the 31st. Just having the director from this committee will be enough.

Chair Miller, I don’t want for you not to have a community center. That is not my ideal. That is the furthest from my ideal. I want you to have the best one possible. Looking at the amount of space you have, I don’t know if the best one possible will fit into the space you have. If you other ideas, we have open ears. I’d love to hear anything.

Coach Paul, I stress, if we plan these things as a community, Boys and Girls Club we compete sometimes, but there is no reason to compete. There are enough kids for PAL and Boys and Girls to work together. There is enough needs for the downtown tutoring, the downtown music and the downtown Police Athletic League on the twenty three (23) acres if we do something down there for all those kids to be able to go there and have something on Stock Island as well. Both sports facility, community center and to have each of these programs branch out. To have all of us work together for the youth. The only problem we have is County, City. We are Key

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West, we are Monroe County and it is different money but I think that there is no reason to say no community center. My 'no' was no here (Bernstein)."

Chair Miller, Are you agreeing with me?

Coach Paul, I am absolutely agreeing with you.

Chair Miller, Ok, you can do that from back there. No offense. We will have Roman luck into this. If anyone has any ideas or another location for a community center let us know. Yes Robin?

Smith-Martin, "My whole thing is children and the neighborhood. If we are talking about a community center, I think it's important that we look at the use of the facility. We can call it what we want to call it. I am a little concerned, I love Rugby, I love every sport, I play lots of sports but, if people don't want a community center because it unhinges on their wants for something else that's not speaking to the needs of the community center and the children. So, we can do both and there may be another spot to do it or do it here without taking up anymore green space that's already set aside. Kids need to run. Kids need green space."

Chair Miller, "I agree! My fear is what they said earlier that once green space goes away it never comes back."

Smith-Martin, "That's right! That's right! And I'd hate to. I would really have a hard time seeing the County pawn off a white elephant as a community center on a bunch of kids and never really see it happen and never put the resources into it. This is going to happen. We need a place for the kids to come together. We need as much green space as possible; we just need to come together"

Board Member Mock, "I am personally almost in line with you. I'm going to ask you Dan, wouldn't it be nice to have the park facility at your door steps?"

Mr. Dombroski, "Yes, it would be nice for that. I am not familiar with the location of the Hickory House. Just because you build something does not mean they are going to come if they do not have easy access to it. The great thing about this park is that it is surrounded by families. It is a place that the can walk to. That was the problem with the Teen Center, it's on the boulevard, how can the kids get there unless the parents drop them off? Just because you build it does not mean they are going to come. You have to have that access; it almost has to be in their face for them to do it. That's the same thing that I was talking about when the City was talking about building a community center on the waterfront property. Yes, you can build it down here but in this community if its one mile or half a mile out of the way they are not going to go. That's the nice think about the park is that it is surrounded by families, the kids can bike, walk. Also I am not sure about the Hickory House and how close it is to the water. We would have to get insurance and we do not know if we could get it or how expensive it would be.

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Co-Chair Boilini, “I think we all have the one single last opportunity to make Bernstein Park the focal point of Stock Island, the center of the community for Stock Island. Stock Island has been under served for years. Bernstein Park, God bless them, we’ve been talking about redoing for five (5) or ten (10) years, and the wisdom of the County Commission who put the money this year to do it. We have the ability to do it. We talk about the Hickory House as a community center, that’s a three (3) million dollar piece of property that I’m not sure that, I as a taxpayer would want to give it up when we have the opportunity to put it right here in Bernstein Park.

Co-Chair Boilini, “I’m going to ask Mr. Horn this question, because there is some active discussion about not having the residence for the policeman there, is there any feasibility of combining the residence with the park, re-orientate the park so that you have an additional fifteen hundred square foot plus another thousand? It would be out of the way, but with a little bit of planning you could have more green space on one side of the park, and the community center closer to the pond?”

Mr. Horn, “I think it is and you have to remember the community center building had other things in it, about a four (4,000) thousand square foot footprint. There is room, but it’s dipping into the green space. There is room if you want a community center there. We could have the residence on the second floor, there is nothing saying that you have to have a one story building. There are options. We will work on that.”

Co-Chair Boilini, “I know from planning parks in the County, we always run into security problems of the controls, concession stands, and break-ins, we’ve had a little bit of a problem up at Key Largo Community Park. We’ve outsourced that, we have an inter-local agreement with the YMCA and Big Pine Park with the Boys and Girls Club. Somebody is going to have to be on site to manage and schedule the park. Because if you do not have an active scheduler in a fix structure on the park that’s when you run into problems. It’s terrible! You need a community center like that where someone can go to, and someone is there almost all the time when the park is open so that the park can be scheduled. A park manager exactly. At the risk of losing a little bit of green space, not very much, you can decrease some of the modules and put a community center. Not a five thousand (5,000) square foot ideal community center but a community center. Correct me if I am wrong but Stock Island has one of the lower incomes in the County and one of the highest percentages of youths in the County, a community center would work perfectly. As much as I love you Steve I am not going to support the Hickory House unless you can show me magic Steve.”

Chair Miller, “I can show you magic!”

Coach Paul, “How does scheme #3 not work? As you look at it the community building with bathrooms could be used from inside without dipping into the green space or the field space. There is a lot of versatility, if you develop those fields.

Mr. Horn, “There’s room. Again that 50 foot setback to 25 foot setback if the County were to allow that there is room there.”

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Co-Chair Boilini, “Roman, do you have a timeline with the County Commission on this? Do you want to see something done by a certain date? If Mr. Horn produces another document or two with input from us tonight and then next month we meet here again.”

Mr. Gastesi, “It’s really up to the community. The money is there, it’s available, it’s funded, it’s in our Capital Improvement Plan. So, it’s really up to the community.”

Co-Chair Boilini, “Mr. Horne, do you have a sense of how long it would take to develop it fully?”

Mr. Horn, “I don’t know what you mean fully, but I think what you are probably talking about is the next round for another meeting, we can look at the directions that we talked about and develop further. It looks like scheme #3 developed with the things we want and don’t want, including a community center.

Co-Chair Boilini, “How long will it take once we say we agree it’s development time. Could you finish in 2014, or the middle of 2015?”

Mr. Horn, “Ah, that’s a more difficult question. We get into this variance.

Co-Chair Boilini, “That’s right, you have to go to zoning.”

Chair Miller, “If I could put it in narrower terms, once we agree on what we would like to pursue how long do you think it would take to get started? Physically shovels in the ground started?”

Mr. Horn, “Well, you do have to go out to bid for the contractors, back to the Commissioners and legal, and that takes months and months. If you want to come back in a month with a more developed scheme #3, develop the cost a little more, develop a timeline schedule. I don’t think there is any panic on behalf of the County and we could get this design right.”

Board Member Smith, “Just a suggestion, what’s wrong with putting the basketball courts indoors? Just a suggestion I know nothing about the budget. They could play all the time and have air conditioning while playing.”

Co-Chair Boilini, “You’re going to give Roman a heart attack.”

Mr. Gastesi, “Not necessarily! Let me tell you what I’ve been doing while I’ve been here, one of the boat barns, if you are familiar with Key West Harbor Yacht Club, they are taking down one of the boat barns. They were just built in 2007, they’re wind rated, they’re huge and they’ve offered it to us. We’ve been kicking around e-mails back and forth about what to do with it, if anything. Obviously, it is a very preliminary offer but I was just talking to Bill about putting that in the park somewhere. I was looking at the structure how it would fit and maybe you can have an indoor basketball court and a community center. So, if we are visioning what we want to see

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out there let's not limit ourselves, and you're recycling. It's a building that's wind rated. You know what I'm talking about? I think they have four or five; they're getting rid of one because they're redeveloping the site. That's a potential option. Maybe we can have a building there. If not a gym, maybe a shell of a building. I've been kicking around some numbers and how it would fit on the scheme. Bill, talk about it. That's why we're here."

Mr. Horn, "I will look into it. As you know I am a little cautious about taking a building from one site and trying to repurpose for another. Built in 2007, now there are 2010 building codes and the wind loads have gone up. It's never that simple, but I will look into it.

Bill McDonough, Key West Rugby. Is there a reason why the community center could not be built over the parking lot?"

Chair Miller, "Will that work with the setbacks?"

Mr. Horn, "A building over a parking lot is done often. It's not always that easy, because the modules of the parking structures do not always work. Then, you are now talking elevators, two stairs, you have that separation from the ground, and we have all those rules and codes. It is certainly worth looking into.

Unidentified attendee, My concern is that we've jumped to three ideas to plan #3. I believe that plan #1 is the best one for Rugby and Soccer.

Co Chair Boilini, From a management stand point wouldn't we all like to manage a park from one central location? It would be easier to manage from scheme #1.

Chair Miller, "Basically, we will have to send this back to you (Mr. Horn). We will have to reconvene, get some stuff down on paper and see how much you guys like the reconfiguration. Could we get back here March 10th. We will reconvene March 10th."

"Rosa asked me to ask you if there is a location closer to the park that you would like to do this at, as opposed to right here. If anybody knows of one. Yes?"

Smith-Martin, "The Captains Lounge at the Stock Island Marina Village."

Chair Miller, "Shrimp Road across from the park. We will put out the public notice" Seriously, the community involvement we've been having is a wonderful thing and are greatly appreciated. We hope that everyone will attend the next meeting, we will have the plans available for you to look at."

Mr. Horn, "Three little things. I guess that I can develop schemes #1 and #3, then, what about parking? We have 42, 45, does that seem to not be enough?

Unidentified attendee, "Suggested turning the swell area into parking spaces, head in."

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Mr. Horn, “I don’t know if we could turn this into parking.”

Mr. Horn, “I have one more, its budget. We start looking at the community center but it’s not in the present budget. Should we still be pursuing that?”

Mr. Gastesi, “Yes, we need to listen for the community needs, if we have to adjust the budget we will talk about it. Right now there is \$3.2 million dollars in the Capital Improvement Plan. But if we have to work with that we can go to the Commission and talk about it.”

Mr. Horn, “Ok. It’s good to bring it up now.”

Chair Miller, “Ok this concludes this portion of the meeting.”

Part II of Meeting

Chair Miller, Reports and discussion on the following parks Bay Point, Big Pine, Key Largo and Higgs Beach.

Rosa Washington, “The only exciting thing happening is that they are getting quotes for the shade structures.”

Chair Miller, “What is happening with the Traveling Vietnam Wall?”

Rosa Washington, “They are coming in April and they have asked for our help in promoting it. I have asked Kevin (Wilson) to authorize some funds to help promote the event.”

Chair Miller, “What about the gentleman concerned about the exhibit being ADA?”

Co Chair Boilini, “I can tell you that they are working him and with the National Association that sponsors the Wall.”

Chair Miller, “Dr. Boilini what’s the date on that?”

Co Chair Boilini, “Set up starts April 8th. The Wall will be open for public viewing the 4/11 – 4/15. But it’s interesting how little knowledge anyone under thirty (30) they have of Vietnam.”

Items for future agenda – Some residents of Big Pine want to talk about exploring the possibility of building an amphitheater at the next meeting in that area. Also talk about the Skate Park.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM

Next meeting: February 10, 2014, at Big Pine Park